

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12 2025

RE: S.B. No. 819
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 819 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to establish an international teacher license for certain visa holders; and
- (2) Establish criteria for obtaining an international teacher license.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Education, Kainalu Elementary School, Lihikai Elementary School, Alliance Abroad, Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights, Filipino Association of University Women, Kauai Visayan Club, Hawaii Coalition for Immigrant Rights, and one hundred seventy-eight individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.



Your Committee finds that the Department of Education's J-1 Visa Program invites certified teachers with equivalent degrees to participate in an exchange with a Department of Education school. Since its inception, two hundred eighteen certified teachers have participated in the J-1 Visa Program at fifty-five schools, with the majority of participants serving in hard-to-staff locations and special education. Despite the J-1 Visa Program's success, existing licensing rules classifies participants as "emergency hires". Teachers wishing to become licensed educators in the State face prohibitive licensing costs such as examination fees for examinations required by the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board. As the State continues to experience a chronic shortage of highly qualified teachers, alleviating certain barriers for participants seeking licensure will ensure the continuation of high quality education statewide. Therefore, this measure addresses continued challenges in the State's educator workforce while preparing students to meet the "globally competitive and locally committed" standard set by the Department of Education.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the international teacher license shall provide teachers hired by the Department of Education and Public Charter Schools the ability to teach all subjects and grade levels that the teacher is qualified to teach;
- (2) Clarifying that international teachers hired as part of a designated exchange visitor program of the United States Department of State shall be eligible for a renewable visiting international teacher license;
- (3) Requiring visiting international teacher license holders to possess a valid and current J-1 visa;
- (4) Clarifying that a visiting international teacher shall have a valid teaching license in the teacher's home country;
- (5) Inserting language that requires renewal of a visiting international teacher license to be conditioned on the existence of a valid and current J-1 visa and



participation in a designated exchange visitor program of the United States Department of State;

- (6) Amending section 1 to reflect its updated purpose;
- (7) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (8) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 819, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 819, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



